

NOTES ON THE IDENTITY OF CERTAIN
TASMANIAN FISHES.

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The opportunity recently afforded me of inspecting the collection of fish contained in the Australian Museum, Sydney, has enabled me to establish the identity of two species inhabiting Tasmanian waters, concerning which there has hitherto been some amount of uncertainty. The first of these is the large species of Parrot Fish, abundant on many parts of the Tasmanian coast, and familiarly known to the fishermen by the title of the "Bluehead." I have hitherto experienced considerable difficulty in my endeavours to identify this fish with either of the several varieties of Parrot Fishes, genus *Labrichthys*, included in Mr. Johnston's catalogue of Tasmanian fishes, and had anticipated it might possibly prove identical with *Cossyphus Gouldii*, the so-called "Blue Groper" of the Sydney fishermen, referred to in the same catalogue as a common Tasmanian form. On submitting a coloured drawing of the Tasmanian "Bluehead" to Mr. Douglas Ogilby, of Sydney, he at once, however, recognised it as being identical with a species that he has quite recently described, Proc. Linn. Soc., N.S.W., under the title of *Labriethys cerulieus*. A reference to the type specimen contained in the Australian Museum has satisfied me as to the correctness of this identification.

The second species to which I have to draw attention is the fish commonly known as the "Magpie Perch." It is not unfrequently exposed for sale in the Hobart Fish Market, and has been referred with some doubt by Mr. Johnston to the *Chilodactylus Gibbosus* of Richardson. On visiting the Manly Aquarium at Sydney, I observed some fish placarded with this name in one of the tanks that were entirely distinct from the Tasmanian variety. With the assistance of Mr. Ogilby, I subsequently referred to the original figures and description of Richardson's species, and thereby ascertained that the "Magpie Perch" of Tasmania is perfectly distinct from *Chilodactylus Gibbosus*, and apparently represents an hitherto undescribed species. For the purposes of comparison I made a hastily-coloured sketch of the New South Wales species, and which I now submit in company with one of the

Tasmanian form. As will be at once recognised, the proportions of the two fish essentially differ, for while in the typical *Chilodactylus jibbosus* the body is comparatively elongate, its total length being equal to about three and-a-half times that of its greatest depth, in the shorter and thicker Tasmanian species the length is equal to only two-and-a-half times that of the maximum depth. The colours, or rather the arrangement of the colours, in the two forms is also very distinct. In both species the ground colour is pearl-grey or nearly white, variegated with bands of dark brown or black. In the typical *Chilodactylus jibbosus* these bands are comparatively narrow, and are developed in an oblique or longitudinal direction; the most conspicuous of these bands originate near the anterior region of the dorsal fin, and passes obliquely and longitudinally backwards into and throughout the lower lobe of the caudal fin; a second band is developed from the anterior edge of the dorsal, and is continued obliquely downwards to the ventral fin. A third band passes in a similar direction immediately behind the head and through the root of the pectoral fin, and a fourth, bifurcated at its upper extremity, passes obliquely downwards and backwards through the eye, meeting the one last described in the ventral region. A short, imperfectly developed band crosses the upper region of the snout.

In the Tasmanian "Magpie Perch," the dark brown or blackish bands are fewer in number, and are developed girdle-wise, almost at right angles to the principle axis of the body, and are so broad as to occupy nearly as large an area as the intervening white or colourless spaces. Two only of these broad bands encircle the body, a third narrower one passing across the eye and cheek. The tail is usually coloured light red, and the tips tinged with the same hue. It being apparently desirable to associate a new specific title with this Tasmanian species, I propose, with reference to the broad bands that encircle its body, to distinguish it provisionally, the title of *Chilodactylus vizonarius*.

Among the rarer fish that have been recently taken in Tasmanian waters, I may make mention here of an example of the New Zealand Frost Fish, or Scabbard Fish, *Lipidopus Candatus*, that was brought to me on Saturday, the 12th inst, and which was captured struggling on the surface of the water in the Fishermen's Dock. The specimen has been remitted to the Museum for preservation.